Mexican Sunflower

Tithonia rotundifolia



Mexican Sunflower in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Red Sunflower

Description:

A vigorous, drought tolerant, warm season annual with a large central stock and leggy, brittle branches of coarse, dark green leaves; bright scarlet to orange flowers appear at the branch ends from mid-summer to frost; great for the back of borders

Ornamental Features

Mexican Sunflower features showy scarlet daisy flowers with orange overtones and gold eyes at the ends of the stems from mid summer to mid fall. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its serrated pointy leaves remain dark green in color with curious grayish green undersides throughout the year.

Landscape Attributes

Mexican Sunflower is an open herbaceous annual with a more or less rounded form. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant. Trim off the flower heads after they fade and die to encourage more blooms late into the season. It is a good choice for attracting bees, butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Mexican Sunflower is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Mexican Sunflower will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 feet. It tends to be leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and should be underplanted with lower-growing perennials. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in poor soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. This species is not originally from North America..

Mexican Sunflower is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.